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THE NEW 52!

BATMAN™

26

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RATED T TEEN

FEB 2014

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BRUCE WAYNE.

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST.

ZERO YEAR

DARK·CITY

SCOTT SNYDER
WRITER
GREG CAPULLO
PENCILLER
DANNY MIKI
INKER

FCO PLASCENCIA
COLORIST
STEVE WANDS
LETTERER
KATIE KUBERT
ASSOC. EDITOR
MIKE MARTS
GROUP EDITOR

CAPULLO & PLASCENCIA
COVER
DUSTIN NGUYEN
VARIANT COVER

BATMAN
CREATED BY
BOB KANE

WHY... LUCIUS...

...WHY...WOULD YOU STAB ME WITH--

ACK!

KARL... YOU DON'T HAVE TO--→KOFF←

KARL! NOW THERE'S A NAME I HAVEN'T HEARD IN QUITE A WHILE.

YOU REMEMBER THE START OF IT, OLD FRIEND?

WE WERE ALL IN THE MEETING ROOM, THE ONE WITH THAT WONDERFUL VIEW, THE SOUTHERN VIEW TO THE BAY...

...AND YOU, YOU SAID TO MR. KANE, "KARL IS BRILLIANT, YES, BUT HE'S ***RECKLESS.*** EVERYTHING HE INJECTS, ***DIES.*** LATELY, HE DOCTORS ***DEATH*** AND LITTLE ELSE."

THE OTHERS, THEY JUST NODDED THESE LITTLE NODS. IT WAS A TUESDAY AFTERNOON, I THINK. NOT LONG BEFORE CHRISTMAS, I REMEMBER, BECAUSE THE BAY, IT WAS FROZEN THIS ***BRILLIANT WHITE.***

KARL, PLEASE, YOU HAVE TO LISTEN TO M---→*unh!*←

YOU KNOW, WHEN YOU ASK THEM, MOST PEOPLE THINK THE SMALLEST BONE IN THE BODY, IT'S IN THE FINGERS, OR THE TOES. BUT THE SMALLEST, TINIEST BONE IS IN THE ***EAR.*** THE STIRRUP BONE...

...IT'S DIFFICULT TO FIND, ONLY THREE TEENSY MILLIMETERS LONG. BUT IF YOU POKE AROUND, YOU CAN DO IT.

YAHHHH!!

DON'T WORRY-- *AGH!*

GET OFF HIM!

...

ARRRRR...

KRRRAK

...RRRAAAAHH!

BRUCE!
RUN! GET OUT OF HERE!

...

BRUCE?

BRUCE WAYNE...?

LEAVE HIM ALONE! HE'S--*ACK!*

...OH MR. *WAAAAYNE!* MR. *WAYNE*, ARE YOU THERE?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU TOOK, OLD FRIEND, TO COUNTERACT MY SERUM, BUT I SUPPOSE WE CAN DO THIS THE *OLD FASHIONED WAY.* Heh.

COME OUT, *MR. WAYNE!*

I HAVE A *STORY* TO TELL YOU.

A STORY YOU'LL WANT TO HEAR.

CLINK

MR WAYNE?

YOU *SEEEE* THIS STORY...IT'S ABOUT *YOU.* AND SOMETHING *TERRIBLE* THAT HAPPENED A LONG TIME AGO.

IT'S FULL OF *SECRETS,* MR. WAYNE. THINGS YOU'D WANT TO *KNOW.*

WHISPERS... LIES...

...AND *TRUTH.*

CLK

TRUTH ABOUT A SPOILED LITTLE RICH BOY WITH *BLOOD* ON HIS HANDS.

HEY, SAWBONES...

WHIRRRR

...WHAT IS IT THEY SAY? STICKS AND STONES MAY BREAK MY BONES...

...OR IS IT *JET ENGINES?* I CAN NEVER REMEMBER.

WHIRRRR

ARGH!

WHIRROOM

LUCIUS!

-KOFF- I'M -KOFF- I'M ALL RIGHT. WE NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE! THE FIRE...

IT'S HOT. GOT IT.

I'M SORRY ABOUT THE *INJECTION,* BRUCE.

IT WAS MY OWN CRUDE VACCINE AGAINST HELFERN'S SERUM. WHEN I HEARD ABOUT PAJI AND THE OTHERS, I KNEW IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF *TIME* BEFORE HELFERN CAME FOR *ME.* THEN WHILE WE WERE TALKING I SAW THE SILENT ALARM GO, AND--

LUCIUS. LESS TALKING. MORE HOBBLING.

RRRAAAAHH!

STILL, WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND IS, WHY DID HE INJECT HIMSELF? AND WHY ISN'T IT *KILLING* HIM, HIS SERU--

EXIT?

THIS WAY! THROUGH THE WEST CORRIDOR!

LUCIUS...

I'VE... I'VE ALMOST GOT IT!

THERE!

LEAVING SO SOOOOOON?!

NO, YOU CAN'T! ESPECIALLY NOT ***YOU,*** MR. WAYNE. I'VE BEEN WAITING SO LONG TO ***MEET*** YOU, AFTER ALL.

YOU KNOW, I'VE ONLY SEEN YOU IN PICTURES. BUT THEY WERE FROM LONG AGO, WHEN YOU WERE A ***CHILD,*** PRACTICALLY.

NOW, YOU MUST BE WHAT, TWENTY-FIVE? YOU KNOW, THAT'S THE AGE YOUR BONES FINISH OSSIFYING. ALL THOSE SOFT CHILD BONES NOW FUSED AND STRONG.

FUNNY, THOUGH...IF YOU KNOW WHERE TO LOOK, YOU CAN STILL FIND THE SOFT SPOTS. LIKE ***SEAMS*** IN THE SKULL...

...WHERE THE BONE KNIT ITSELF TOGETHER. THE SEAMS ARE STILL THERE...DEEP, LIKE ***STITCHES...***

...WAITING TO BE ***POPPED OPEN.***

NNNG!

KKK...KK...

BLAM

ARGH!

STEP AWAY FROM THE BILLIONAIRE--

--AND PUT YOUR CLAWS IN THE AIR.

THREE, TWO...

RRAAAHH!

BLAM BLAM

MY GOD, IS HE DE--

BRUCE, STAY WITH ME! *BRUCE!*

"BRUCE!"

YOUR *FATHER* IS ON THE PHONE.

GO ON. THE SOFT DEATH AWAITS. SPEAK WITH HIM ONE LAST TIME.

BRUCE?

PLEASE, BRUCE! TALK TO ME.

BRUCE ARE YOU THERE?!

BRUCE?
I'M AWAKE, ALFRED.
LUCIUS?
HE'S ALL RIGHT. JUST DOWN THE HALL.
HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN--?
THE BETTER PART OF A *DAY,* SIR.
I HAVE TO GO.
ACTUALLY, SIR, YOU HAVE TO *REST.* YOU HAVE A LINEAR CRANIAL FRACTURE.
I NEED TO FINISH THE *JAMMER,* ALFRED.
THE MAYOR AND THE POLICE, THEY'LL HAVE THE POWER READY TO GO IN LESS THAN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS...
...AND THE *RIDDLER,* IF I DON'T JAM WHATEVER SIGNAL HE'S PLANNING TO USE, HE'LL JUST CRIPPLE THE CITY AGAIN WITH ANOTHER BLACKOUT.
AND WITH *DEATH* STILL ON THE LOOSE...
MASTER BRUCE.
YOUR *SKULL.*
IS *BROKEN.*
THINK ABOUT THAT. YOU'RE LUCKY THERE WAS NO HEMORRHAGING. BUT HAD THAT MONSTER HELD YOUR HEAD EVEN *HALF A SECOND* LONGER, YOUR SKULL WOULD LIKELY HAVE BEEN CRUSHED. CRUSHED, WITH PIECES OF BONE *PIERCING* YOUR *BRAIN.*
DO YOU *UNDERSTAND,* SIR?
I DO.
DID YOU BRING A CHANGE FOR ME?
→Sigh←
ALFRED.
MY FORMAL WEAR?
...
MY *FORMAL* WEAR.
I DON'T HAVE *TIME* FOR THIS, AL--
CLINK.
WHAT THE--

YOU AND I ARE GOING TO *TALK*, MR. WAYNE.

IF YOU'VE BEEN WAITING AROUND FOR A *THANK YOU*, I'M AFRAID YOU'RE GOING TO BE DISAPPOINTED, GORDON.

SO YOU MIGHT AS WELL GO BACK TO CHASING BATMAN WITH COMMISSIONER LOEB AND COMPANY.

I COULD. BECAUSE YOU'RE RIGHT, EVEN IN THE MIDST OF A TERRORIST ATTACK, AND A COMING SUPER-STORM, ALL LOEB SEES IS ***BATMAN.*** A VIGILANTE WHO'S POPULAR IS AN ***EMBARRASSMENT*** TO HIM.

BUT I SAID IT THE OTHER DAY. THERE ARE BIGGER THINGS HAPPENING HERE THAN WHAT'S BETWEEN YOU AND ME. CLEARLY, YOU'RE AFTER HELFERN. WELL, SO AM *I*. NOT THE FORCE. NOT LOEB. ***ME,*** JIM GORDON.

NOW YOU MIGHT NOT ***LIKE*** ME, BUT WE'RE ON THE SAME ***TEAM.***

WE'RE BOTH TRYING TO STOP HIM FROM KILLING YOUR PEOPLE. AND I'M TELLING YOU, WE'LL GET THIS GUY IF WE SHARE INFORMATION.

BUT IF YOU ***HIDE*** INFORMATION, YOU'RE JUST GETTING IN THE WAY OF THINGS AND I CAN'T ALLOW THAT. WE NEED TO WORK ***TOGETHER*** HERE, MR. WAYNE.

YOU KNOW WHAT?

YOU'RE RIGHT.

I DON'T LIKE YOU.

YOU KNOW WHAT I'D REALLY LIKE TO KNOW, THOUGH? *Huh*, GORDON? WHERE'D YOU GET THAT ***TRENCH COAT*** YOU ALWAYS WEAR?

WHAT?

"YOU HEARD ME. YOUR COAT. WHERE'D YOU GET IT? IT'S NICE. 'LUXURIOUS.'"

"MR. WAYNE, I JUST CAME TO--"

"*TALK*. YOU SAID IT YOURSELF. SO LET'S TALK.

"LET'S TALK ABOUT THE DAY IT *HAPPENED*. HOW ABOUT IT, GORDON?

"YOU REMEMBER IT? BECAUSE *I* DO. YOU ESCORTING ME FROM THE *THEATER*, PLAYING TRUANT OFFICER.

"YOU AND...WHO WAS IT AGAIN? WHAT WAS HIS NAME? OH, RIGHT. DETECTIVE *DAN CORRIGAN*."

JUNIOR.

"YOU TWO DROVE ME BACK TO THE STATION TO WAIT FOR MY PARENTS. BUT ALONG THE WAY, YOU KEPT MAKING THESE STOPS.

"AT THE FIFTH OR SIXTH ONE, A TAILOR SHOP, I'D BECOME REALLY *CURIOUS*, AND I REMEMBER ASKING YOU..."

Custom Tailor

716

WHY DO YOU KEEP *STOPPING* EVERYWHERE?

WE'RE JUST *CHECKING IN,* MR. WAYNE. EVERY CAR HAS A NEIGHBORHOOD TO PROTECT AND THIS IS OURS. WE LIKE TO STOP AND MAKE SURE EVERYONE IS *SAFE.*

"I REMEMBER THINKING HOW *NICE* THAT WAS TO HEAR. FEELING THIS APPRECIATION FOR WHAT YOU DID, FOR YOU YOURSELF, GORDON.

"I REMEMBER THIS URGE I HAD, WANTING TO GIVE YOU SOMETHING, SOME GIFT, OR A *THANK YOU.*

"AND THEN LO AND BEHOLD, YOUR PARTNER, CORRIGAN, HE GOT BACK IN THE CAR AND *HE* HAD A GIFT FOR YOU.

"IT WAS ALMOST LIKE I HAD CONJURED IT UP WITH MY OWN MIND. THIS BEAUTIFUL *TRENCH COAT.*

"I REMEMBER PULLING AWAY AND HEADING TOWARD THE STATION, AND FEELING GOOD ABOUT THINGS. FEELING THIS STRANGE SENSE OF *SAFETY.*

"THE POLICE WERE THERE TO *PROTECT* THE PEOPLE, AND THE PEOPLE WERE *GRATEFUL.*"

WHAT I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND AT THE TIME WAS THAT THE COAT WAS JUST A #@$% *PAYOFF.* LIKE *ALL* THE GIFTS.

YOU WEREN'T WATCHING *OUT* FOR THE PEOPLE IN THAT NEIGHBORHOOD. YOU WERE WATCHING THEM SUFFER AND *DIE.*

MR. WAYNE, I'D WARN YOU THAT WE ALL HAVE THINGS...*DARK* THINGS THAT--

CLANG

--*DAMMIT,* WAYNE!

I REMEMBER ALL OF THAT LIKE IT WAS YESTERDAY, GORDON. OF COURSE, WHAT *REALLY* STICKS IN MY MIND IS WHAT HAPPENED LATER *THAT NIGHT...*

...IN THAT ALLEY, BEHIND THE THEATER. AND WHAT I REMEMBER MOST *VIVIDLY* FROM THAT NIGHT...

...IS THIS.

THIS *VIEW.*

YOU WANT TO ARREST ME, *ARREST* ME. BUT I'LL *NEVER* TRUST YOU. YOU'RE CROOKED. YOUR *MEN* ARE CROOKED. AND YOU CAN *ROT* IN THAT COAT OF YOURS.

NOW GIVE ME MY DAMN *FORMAL WEAR,* ALFRED.

LIEUTENANT!

THIS JUST CAME INTO THE STATION. IT WAS ADDRESSED TO THE COMMISSIONER. I THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW. THIS IS A COPY.

OH, NO.

SIR, THE READINGS I'M GETTING ON THE STORM, **RENE**...THE BAY WILL BE PRACTICALLY IMPASSABLE BY--

WE'RE FINE. I'M APPROACHING THE NEWTON CENTER.

HOPEFULLY, DRs. DEEDS AND BROOKER ARE AS PROTECTIVE OF THEIR WORK AS KELVER AND PAJI WERE. IF THEY'RE INSIDE, I CAN GET TO THEM ***BEFORE*** HELFERN DOES.

THEY'RE THE ONLY ONES ***LEFT ALIVE*** OF THE GROUP HE WAS HIRED WITH.

THE DOOR SHOULD BE OPEN WHEN YOU ARRIVE. WHILE YOU'RE THERE, YOU MIGHT ASK THEM TO DOUBLE-CHECK YOUR OPTIMISTIC CALCULATIONS ABOUT THE BAY. THEY ARE A **WEATHER CENTER,** AFTER ALL.

"IN ***NAME,*** PHILIP USED THE ACADEMIC RESEARCH AS A TAX WRITE-OFF. BUT AT ***HEART,*** THE PLACE IS A "STRATEGIC" METEOROLOGICAL CENTER. ***WEAPONIZING WEATHER.***

"SEEDING CLOUDS TO STORM FOR WEEKS. OR ATMOSPHERIC DISPERSANTS THAT NEGATE CLOUDS ALTOGETHER, CAUSING DROUGHT..."

"WEAPONIZING WEATHER. YOUR UNCLE NEVER--"

SPEAK NOT ILL OF THE DEAD, MY FRIEND.

I'M IN...

...DR. DEEDS?

...HELLLLPPPP UUSSSSSS...

HELLPPPUUNNNG!

SIR...?

PLEEEASSSEE...

I'M TOO *LATE!*

THEY'VE ALREADY BEEN INJECTED. THEY'RE PAST HELP.

SPEAKING OF WHICH...

...HELLO THERE, MR. BAT. →*heh*← HOW ABOUT YOU HOLD *REEEAAL* STILL?

GEEZ, WHAT'D HE ***DO*** TO THEM?

STAY CLEAR, EVERYONE! HE HAS A ***WEAPON!*** REPEAT, HE HAS A WEAPON! PREPARE TO ***FIRE!***

WAIT.

NOT A CHANCE, ***FREAK.***

HE'S DRAWING! ***OPEN FIRE!***

NEXT: BURIED BONES

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THIS IS *AMBUSH BUG* FOR *CHANNEL 52* REPORTING *LIVE* FROM THE OUTER EDGE OF THE UNIVERSE--WHERE THE *GREEN LANTERN CORPS* ARE ON THE MOVE!

WE'RE TOLD THEIR NEW LEADER, EARTH'S VERY OWN *HAL JORDAN*, IS IN DANGER ON THE PLANET BELOW--BUT I'VE GOTTA ASK...WHAT KIND OF THREAT WOULD REQUIRE AN ENTIRE ARMY, *AND* A *LIVING PLANET*, TO RESPOND TO IT?!

WE'RE KEEPING A CLOSE EYE ON THIS SITUATION, AND WE'LL UPDATE YOU AS IT DEVELOPS!

THOUGH IF THIS TRANSMISSION'S MOVING AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT, YOU SHOULD BE WATCHING THIS REPORT ON...TUESDAY...OF JULY 85,271? WAIT, THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT.

CHANNEL 52 BREAKING NEWS

ANYWAY! KEEP IT TUNED TO *CHANNEL 52!*

• Nick Cardy •

1920-2013

Zone